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# Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 BIB-01 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 L-03 SP-02 /058 W
----------060744 152038Z /44
R 141353Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1254
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 3185

USIA PASS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HEDGES

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETEL BC
SUBJECT: VOA: POSSIBLE TRANSMITTER IN BOTSWANA

REF:A) GABORONE 2089 B) MASERU 1889 AND PREVIOUS (C) USIA 13483

1. IN THE WAKE OF LESOTHO'S INTEREST IN VOA REPORTED REF B AND CONTINUED ABSENCE OF REACTION TO MY UNOFFICIAL INQUIRY REF A ABOUT GOB INTEREST IN DISCUSSING VOA TRANSMITTER HERE, I RAISED INFORMALLY WITH EXTAFFMIN PERM SECRETARY MPOTOKWANE ON DECEMBER 6 THE QUESTION OF STATUS OF THIS SUBJECT. MPOTOKWANE SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT. HE TELEPHONED FOLLOWING DAY FOR CONFIRMATION ABOUT DETAILS, SPECIFICALLY THE NUMBER OF HOURS DAILY THAT VOA WOULD PROPOSE TO USE THE TRANSMITTER. AFTER REVIEWING INSTRUCTIONS (REF C), I REPLIED THAT MY GUIDANCE STATED OUR DESIRE FOR FOUR HOURS DAILY, I.E., 1800-2200 LOCAL TIME. EXTAFF PERM SEC'S REACTION WAS THAT THIS FIGURE SEEMED TO BE "HIGH"; WAS IT NEGOTIABLE? I REPLIED THAT WE WERE ONLY AT THE STAGE OF DECIDING WHETHER NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN AND ASSUMED THAT NO QUESTION WAS EXCLUDED IN ADVANCE. MPOTOKWANE SAID HE WAS PREPARING MEMO FOR
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PRESIDENT KHAMA. HE APOLOGIZED FOR DELAY AND SAID A REPLY WOULD SOON BE FORTHCOMING.

2. ON DECEMBER 13, DCM AND I WERE ASKED TO COME TO STATE HOUSE ON SEVERAL PENDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS. MPOTOKWANE JOINED PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TIBONE (BDF COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL MERAFHE, WAS

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ALSO PRESENT). MPOTOKWANE SAID HE HAD REPLY TO OUR
REQUEST RE VOA TRANSMITTER AS FOLLOWS:
A) GOB IS INTERESTED IN PROPOSAL FOR A TRANSMITTER IN
BOTSWANA. HOWEVER, GOB PRESENTLY HAS 50 KW TRANSMITTER;
THEY THEREFORE SAW LITTLE OR NO ADVANTAGE IN ESTABLISHING A
SECOND 50 KW TRANSMITTER IN GABORONE. UNLESS A LARGER
TRANSMITTER WAS AVAILABLE (THEY MENTIONED 250 KW),
COVERAGE FROM GABORONE COULD NOT BE SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDED.
IF TRANSMITTER IS 50 KW, GOB URGED IT BE LOCATED AT
SELEBI-PIKWE;
B) GOB WOULD PROPOSE TO ALLOCATE VOA FOUR HOURS
FROM 1900-2100 LOCAL (RATHER THAN 1800-2200 AS SUGGESTED
REF C). REASON FOR THIS CHANGE IS THAT 1800-1900 IS
NEWS TIME ON RADIO BOTSWANA;
C) ASKED WHY GOB PROPOSED SELEBI-PIKWE AS SITE OF
NEW TRANSMITTER, MPOTOKWANE SAID REASON WAS ASSURANCE
OF ADEQUATE ELECTRIC POWER THERE. (POWER IS INDEED
HIGHLY EXPENSIVE AND INEFFICIEANTLY PRODUCED IN GABORONE.);
D) IN FURTHER RECOGNITION OF PROBLEM OF ELECTRIC POWER,
MPOTOKWANE SAID HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ASK US IF
U.S. WOULD PROVIDE GENERATOR FOR EMERGENCY USE.
WE REPLIED THAT WE WOULD INQUIRE. (WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT 400 KW OF
ELECTRIC POWER WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR 250 KW
TRANSMITTER.) IN SUMMARY, GOB OFFICIALS SAID THEY WOULD
BE PLEASED TO DISCUSS PROPOSED PROJECT WITH USG OFFICIALS.

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4. COMMENT: POSITIVE GOB RESPONSE, WHICH HAS
PRESIDENT KHAMA'S CONCURRENCE, APPEARS TO US TO PROVIDE
A PROMISING BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT ESTABLISHING
VOA TRANSMITTER IN BOTSWANA. WE VIEW GOB INITIATIVE IN
PROPOSING SELEBI-PIKWE AS ALTERNATIVE TRANSMITTER SITE AS
ENCOURAGING EVIDENCE OF (A) GOB TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN
U.S. SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLICY, AND (B) WILLINGNESS TO
ASSOCIATE ITSELF CLOSELY WITH US (AND WITH OUR
POLICY) IN AS SENSITIVE A FIELD AS BROADCASTING. FROM THIS
PRESPECTIVE GOB-PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE SITE OF SELEBI-PIKWE,
WHILE STILL AT VARIANCE WITH PREFERRED GABORONE LOCATION
(REF C), DESERVES CAREFUL STUDY. THE TOWN OF SELEBI-PIKWE
IS A FAST-DEVELOPING COMMUNITY THE SIZE OF GABORONE
(28,000) AND MORE IMPORTANT ECONOMICALLY THAN FRANCISTOWN,
E.G., COPPER-NICKEL PLANT WORTH OVER $200 MILLION (AMAX
BEING LARGEST SINGLE INVESTOR) IS LOCATED THERE. AN
EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY OF SOME 500 PERSONS IS RESIDENT
AND SOME AMENITIES ARE AVAILABLE. AS FOR TECHNICAL
CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN LOCATION AT SELEBI-PIKWE, GOB
OFFICIALS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC AT PROSPECT OF DAYTIME AND
GREATLY IMPROVED NIGHTIME COVERAGE FOR CENTRAL AND
NORTHERN DISTRICTS OF BOTSWANA, FOR MUCH OF RHODESIA AND

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NORTHERN TRANSVAAL. GOB OFFICIALS HAD DONE SOME HOME-WORK AND SEEMED TO KNOW THE RANGE OF TRANSMITTERS. WE HOPE VOA IS PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP ON GOB OPENING AND BEGIN DISCUSSIONS ASAP.
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# Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
**Decaption Note:**
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009
**Disposition Event:**
**Disposition History:** n/a
**Disposition Reason:**
**Disposition Remarks:**
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**Enclosure:** n/a
**Executive Order:** GS
**Errors:** N/A
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a
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**Reference:** 77 GABORONE 2089, 77 MASERU 1889
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**Review Exemptions:** n/a
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**Review Release Date:** n/a
**Review Release Event:** n/a
**Review Transfer Date:**
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a
**SAS ID:** 243891
**Secure:** OPEN
**Status:** NATIVE
**Subject:** VOA: POSSIBLE TRANSMITTER IN BOTSWANA
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**To:** STATE USIA
**Type:** TE
**vdkvgwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3532d504-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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